(i) Continuous monitoring of movement of damaged tanker and oil spill using air and ship surveillance was undertaken.

(ii) Aerial and ship spray of chemical dispersants was done to combat the oil slick.

(iii) The damaged tanker was cleared of the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone waters.

(iv) Water samples from affected area were collected for analysis; and

(v) An initiative was taken through Ministry of External Affairs to see that adequate safety measures are taken to avoid such accidents involving tankers passing through heavily congested tanker route of States of Malacca.

(d) The oil slick was managed by Indian Coast Guard alone without any foreign assistance. No offer to assist Indian efforts was received at the time of accident to neutralise the oil slick.

Tiger Project

1055. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Tiger Project has completed two decades;

(b) if so, what were the targets set at the time of launching the project alongwith the achievements made till now;

(c) whether any new set of problems have been identified ; and

(d) if so, what are the steps proposed to be taken to tackle those problems ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The 'Project Tiger' was launched on April 1, 1973, to ensure maintenance of a viable population of tigers in India. At the time of its launch, there were 268 tigers within nine reserves, whereas the population, as per 1989 census, is 1327 tigers in 18 Tiger Reserves. The Project, apart from conserving the tiger, has also helped in protecting a wide spectrum of species of flora and fauna. The problems that are being faced in the management of these Tiger Reserves, relate mainly to the increased biotic pressure, threats from smugglers/poachers and armed activists taking refuge in the Tiger Reserve areas. These problems are being tackled appropriately, with the formulation of eco-development plans, ensuring participation of the local communities in the management of the reserves. Additionally, the patrolling have been intensified and vigilance strengthened to combat the threat of poaching.

Indo British Environment Initiative

1056. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI : Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India and United Kingdom have jointly set up as Indo-British Environmental Initiative to work together on environmental issues;

(b) if so, what are the details of this agreement;

(c) whether India and China have also discussed environmental problems of the two countries as also the global issues; and

(d) if so, the details of these discussions ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) and (b) An Indo-British Environmental Initiative was launched on 21st April, 1993. The text is given in the enclosed statement (*See* below)

(c) and (d) India and China have had on-going discussions for some years on matters of common interest in the field of environment. The common position of India and China contributed significantly to the amendments to the Montreal Protocol in 1990. As part of the preparatory process to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of June, 1992, there was close collaboration between both the countries leading to the Conference of select Developing Countries on Global Environmental Issues held in New Delhi in April, 1990, and the Ministerial Conferences of Developing Countries held in Beijing and Kaula Lumpur in June 1991 and April, 1992 respectively. More recently, during the visit to India in April 1993 of His Excellency Song Jian, State Councillor and Chairman, State Science and Technology Commission, People's Republic of China, fruitful discussions were held on global environmental issues and also on the need to strengthen the mutual ties and to enlarge the scope of bilateral activities.

Statement

Text of the Indo-British Environmental Initiative

The first meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Development in June of this year will be crucial. A clear political direction should be given to the Commissions work. For this to happen, the Ministerial segment of 23-24 June, 1993 is of particular importance. Apart from taking stock of the progress made in realising the commitments made at Rio, including those relating to the provisions of financial resources and the transfer of technology to developing countries, this occasion will held establish the political profile of the Commission for Sustainable Development. This enhanced political visibility will enable it to play a catalytic role rather than becoming merely a monitor.

Ministers will also want to take stock of the progress towards sustainable development. To facilitate this process :

—Ministers might aim for a free ranging debate, rather than reading our prepared speeches, during which they could highlight the specific national problems they face in translating Agenda 21 objectives into practical policies;

—The Ministerial session might be used to agree on the guidelines and the format in which information should be given by Governments to the Commission on Sustainable Development and the approach to be adopted to assessing this material in order to establish priorities for further action:

—Ministers might also review what action other international agencies are taking to follow-up Agenda 21, activity so as to ensure their priorities and those of the Commission are consistent ;

—Ministers should also evaluate the reports from the funding mechanisms about the flows of financial resources for implementing the package which emerged at Rio;

—Ministers will seek to avoid duplication of debate and focus on

those sectoral issues of Agenda 21, which need priority and which are not covered in the context of the existing Conventions or Conventions being negotiated.

INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY ISSUES

The universal commitment and political consensus on the non-legally binding forestry Principles adopted at Rio provides a good foundation for action in this area. The issues involved in forest management are complex and country specific. They involve not only national Government but also local communities. Regard should be paid in this context to the role of the FAO, the UN specialised agency for forestry affairs, and efforts should be made to enable it to deal with these responsibilities more effectively.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

On the Climate Change Convention's progress is being made in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) and the Inter-governmental Penal on Climate Change (IPCC). On this convention, and also on the Biodiversity Convention, impetus needs to be given to the preparation of strategies to achieve the objectives of the two Conventions. The wide and early ratification of both Conventions is important as each of them complements the other.

We look forward to the early completion of the negotiations towards a Convention on the Prevention of Desertification and to early resolution of outstanding issues about its scope.

Crucial for the implementation of the Conventions is the replenishment and restructuring of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Progress on these issues has been slow. Openness and transparency must be the hall mark of the GEF. Issues relating to the scope of the GEF should be satisfactorily resolved. The GEF should supplement and not suppant other funding mechanisms.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has done sustained and successful work in keeping the attention of national governments on environmental issues. We believe that UNEP should continue with its role as an organiser of programmes focussing on technical issues, information exchange, training, promoting environmental awareness and concerns and the development of international law for the environment as well as sustainable development. UNEP has also contributed significantly to the development of material and associated literature relating to international conventions and treaties. We urge that all this continues. UNEP should further promote such technical networking between governments and institutions, including the development of national capabilities to interpret geographical information systems and satellite imagery.

Some of the issues which need to be discussed further at the Governing Council in May of 1993 relate to its membership, composition, size, frequency of meetings, regional representation and financing of its operations. UNEP needs a wider basis of support from the international community to give political guidance between Governing Council meetings and a more stable financial base. It also needs a clear work programme for the next few years and a clear relationship to the work of other Agencies and the various Conventions.